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29 July 1963

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

Syria: Major General Hafiz' elevation to chairman of Syria's Revolutionary Command Council on 27 July appears to solidify hard-line Baathist control of Syria's Government.

Hafiz, who is believed to have been responsible for the regime's recent bloody suppression of pro-Nasir and other anti-Baathist elements, now holds most of the key government positions. Besides holding the chairmanship of the Command Council, he is army commander in chief, minister of defense and interior, and deputy to civilian Premier Salah Bitar.

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Former chairman and army chief Atasi's conciliatory policy toward the regime's enemies, including Nasir, probably led to his removal. Hafiz' emergence as strong man also puts in doubt the future of Bitar, who has reportedly been losing support among the Baathist membership.

Egypt's attitude toward the change is probably foreshadowed by the Cairo-controlled Middle East News Agency, which calls Hafiz Syria's "absolute ruler." The agency claims the change means that the Baathists intend to continue the "killings and arrests of the Syrian people." Cairo-directed subversive efforts against the Baathists may continue, but chances for upsetting the regime in the near future appear to be growing slimmer.

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Soviet Bloc: CEMA and Moscow apparently have temporarily abandoned their goal of supra-national planning in favor of continued "coordination" of national economic plans.

The 28 July communiqué resulting from the three-day meeting of the party first secretaries of CEMA member countries suggests that economic cooperation will continue to be strengthened, but not at the price of abandoning national positions. For example, planning for such projects as the CEMA international bank and multilateral clearing of trade accounts is said to be proceeding.

This change in emphasis was apparently designed to meet Rumania's objections to supranational planning. Rumors circulating in Moscow suggest, moreover, that Rumania will be allowed to continue its plans for development of heavy industry in general and its steel industry in particular.

Reflecting Soviet concern with agricultural problems within the bloc, each member country is to continue its efforts to raise local agricultural production and more cooperation is called for to provide "material and technical support" to agriculture. Two of the three Soviet efforts in intrabloc cooperation the communiqué specifically cited deal with the development of resources for expanded fertilizer production.

During the CEMA talks a one-day meeting of the Warsaw Pact signatories--also attended by the first secretaries--was held. Aside from endorsing the partial nuclear test-ban treaty, the unusually brief and noncommittal Pact communiqué referred only to "appropriate decisions" made with regard to the state of the Pact armed forces.

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Cuba: In his 26 July speech, Fidel Castro was more aggressive on the theme of Latin American revolution than he has been in any other public statement since well before his trip to the Soviet Union last spring.

He made it clear that he regards Cuba as the main source of inspiration and guidance for what he calls the inevitable revolution in Latin America. He denied again that Cuba provides money or arms to Latin American revolutionaries, but declared that "we are experts on ideas" and share them with revolutionaries from all over the world. In the presence of between 200 and 300 visitors from elsewhere in Latin America--many of whom are likely to remain in Cuba for training--he declared that what has happened in Cuba can happen "exactly the same in many Latin American countries."

Castro asserted that in many countries of the hemisphere conditions are more propitious for revolutionary action than they were in Cuba ten years ago when he began his struggle. He declared that "fighting revolutionaries" must take full advantage of these conditions and "open the breach."

He admitted that some countries--Brazil, Bolivia, Mexico, Chile, and Uruguay--have "greater stability" than others, partly, he said, because they have not become "blind tools of imperialist aggression" against Cuba. He named most of the other countries, however, as being ripe for revolution and sent greetings of "solidarity and fraternity" specifically to the "heroic fighters" of Venezuela and Guatemala.

Castro stated that "we know by experience and conviction that all people who do what the Cuban people have done will have the decided support of the Soviet Union."

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France-Algeria: [REDACTED]

France is planning to conduct a series of underground nuclear tests in the Algerian Sahara this fall.]

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[REDACTED] these tests will be France's "last three or four" in Algeria.

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[REDACTED] Paris has informed Premier Ben Bella that they will take place "as of September."]

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[REDACTED] (Last spring Ben Bella reacted to similar tests in a moderate fashion and did not denounce French use of the Sahara bases when the 1962 Evian accords were being renegotiated. Tests during the next few months, which would provoke an outcry from Soviet bloc and Afro-Asian states, would be poorly timed for him, however. During this period his regime faces several serious political hurdles, and testing would give his opponents a valuable propaganda issue.]

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NOTES

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Guinea-USSR: Moscow is continuing to press Conakry for landing rights for its regular Moscow-Havana TU-114 flight. The Guineans refused last week's scheduled flight on the excuse that they were not permitted to refuel it with their US-supplied kerosene. The Soviets now reportedly plan to supply their own kerosene, however, which would make it politically difficult for the Guineans to fulfill their assurances to the US that the flights will be prevented.

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Bolivia: On 26 July the Bolivian tin miners' union temporarily suspended its tactics of calling sporadic sympathy strikes protesting government mining reform proposals, and called a union congress for today. The widely reported miners' plan for a 27 July march on the capital failed to materialize. Extensive government security precautions may have caused them either to delay their march to coincide with the Bolivian national holiday on 5-7 August, or to postpone it indefinitely.

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Brazil: Extreme leftist Foreign Minister Evandro Lins will be nominated for the Supreme Court today or tomorrow, according to Foreign Ministry officials. The 11-man court, which acts as a check on executive action in Brazil, already includes three justices with leftist leanings. It is not yet known who would replace Lins.

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